

Good Afternoon Ladies And Gentlemen:

I write as the chair of the Greater Mystic Visitors Bureau (GMVB) to ask that you support full funding for the state's tourism efforts. It goes without saying that the business of tourism is not an expenditure but rather an investment. Research by DECD as well as analytics readily available to everyone prove without a shadow of doubt that the money spent to promote the tourism industry over the past 4 years proved to be a wise investment for the state. This past year alone the state collected \$105 million in revenue from the so called bed tax.

This industry has been very hard hit by the recession as well as the previous decision to reduce the budget to \$1. A reduction in this budget at this time will do serious damage to the efforts to build on branding the state and our ability to attract out of state visitors. It will result in job losses which will damage one of our bright segments of the state's economy.

Bringing people to the state represents new money which results in job growth. Tourism is a measured bright spot in Connecticut's economic recovery since Governor Malloy restored CT to the map of New England and created a marketing budget. This is not the time to reduce our efforts. It is for this reason that the GMVB asks that you fully fund the tourism budget to the \$15 million level.

Tony Sheridan

President & CEO

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